

# Galatin Jenkins: 19

## Margin of Victory Is Increased

By the Associated Press

Weston, Va. (AP) — The 19th Congressional District election in the 11th Virginia Congressional District was a close one, but the margin of victory was increased by a large margin.

One of West Virginia's greatest living historians, and certainly the greatest expert on Stonewall Jackson, is Dr. Roy Bird Cook of Charleston. Dr. Cook's masterful article which appeared in the West Virginia History magazine of May, 1934, so eloquently describes Congressman Jenkins's campaign visit to Weston that it is quoted here at length:

"It was a great day in the town of Weston, Monday, May 9, 1859. The 800 inhabitants were augmented by the addition of friends and neighbors of all political faiths who rode into the town from all corners of the county. The attraction was a debate between two opposing candidates for Congress from the 11th Virginia Congressional District.

"Early in the day the stage came in from the railroad town of Clarksburg, 24 miles to the north. The crowd that gathered in the front of the Bailey House was somewhat divided in sentiment, but called out approval to two men who alighted from the mud-covered coach, for it was a season of rains. One of the men had travelled by boat from the reaches of the Ohio River, below the Great Kanawha, and the other was equally well known along the lower Monongahela, and the country around Barboursville, the then county seat of Cabell. Both were talented lawyers.

"Afternoon came and the bell in the old Court House rang. A huge bell that pealed forth from the belfry of an old Colonial Court House, with giant pillars reaching to the roof, shielding a portico from which the 'court crier' served warning upon those having business therein. The crowd gathered in groups outside to discuss what John S. Carlile of Clarksburg had or had not done, and stir up individual arguments as to the state of the country. Soon the 'town hall' on the second floor was filled to overflowing. There sat Alexander Scott Withers,

exponent of the North; Alfred H. Jackson, exponent of the South; and hundreds of others destined to figure in future national affairs.

"The senior of the group was none other than James M. Laidley, more experienced than his opponent; a very able member of the bar. An hour passed while he took up national issues, giving special attention to the tariff. His opponent, a young man not quite twenty-nine, then took up the issues of the day. Seddon had the walls of the old court house ever heard such a masterful presentation of the subject. He had, two months earlier, been nominated as a 'sterling Democrat' at a convention held in Parkersburg, as a candidate for re-election to the National Congress. Newspapers far and wide had commented on an address he had made in Congress, on January 13th, on 'Foreign Relations,' F. J. Alfred, editor of the Weston Herald, on the following Monday commented that Mr. Laidley was no match for the Hon. Albert G. Jenkins in a public discussion, and observed that the 'Democracy is delighted with him.' He further admonished all the Democrats to pull together 'next Tuesday' and 'you will roll up a large majority for Letcher, Montague, Tucker and Jenkins. Keep cool, gentlemen; voters, the weather is warm, no ice on hand, and don't touch the fighting whisky.' Little did the 'fighting editor' of the Herald, the bitter enemy of Abraham Lincoln, know that when he helped roll up a vote of 668 for Jenkins, and 248 for Laidley, that he was helping make a national figure, and that three years later Brigadier General Albert Galatin Jenkins, at the head of a division of the Confederate Army, would ride into town and capture the same court house. But such came to pass."

The campaign battle ground onward toward its climax on the fourth Tuesday in May, 1859. Not once did Congressman Jenkins let up in his break-neck pace down to the wire. Again he returned to the Greenbottom homestead at the end of May to await the slow process of receiving the returns from the 19

counties which comprised his vast Congressional District.

The June 1, 1859, issue of the Kanawha Valley Star finally stated that Congressman Jenkins had been 'returned to Congress by a largely increased majority which cannot be otherwise than gratifying to himself and his friends. His opponent, Mr. Laidley, is an honorable gentleman and quite a popular man, and we believe made as good a race as any other man of his party could have done.'

As in 1857, Jenkins carried 13 out of 19 counties, but he nearly doubled his 1857 majority in racking up a victory by 9,038 to 7,230.

His margin in Cabell County slipped from 113 down to 78, perhaps attributable to the fact that he concentrated his time in the upper portion of the district.

The official returns from the 1859 election revealed the following results in Virginia's 11th Congressional District:

County	Jenkins	Laidley
Barbour	804	353
Braxton	269	422
Cabell	518	442
Calhoun	259	95
Doddridge	591	87
Gilmer	303	125
Harrison	1088	779
Jackson	444	411
Kanawha	417	1191
Lewis	671	264
Putnam	409	477

Randolph	441	245
Ritchie	417	135
Roane	258	223
Tucker	182	10
Upshur	436	275
Wirt	287	170
Wood	654	837
Mason	490	589
	8338	7130

The war clouds hung heavier over the horizon as Congressman Jenkins prepared for his second term in the House of Representatives. In fact, John Brown's fanatical raid on Harper's Ferry was only a few months away.

(To Be Continued)